



McHenry County Department of Health

"Working to prevent disease and promote health and safety
for all people of McHenry County since 1966"



Better Hearing and Speech

This annual observance is when attention is focused on the needs of the millions of individuals from infants to the elderly who suffer from communication disorders.

Did you know:

- 28 million people in the U.S. suffer from hearing loss.
- 16 million people in the U.S. have a speech and/or language disorder.
- Hearing loss is the most common congenital disorder in newborns.
- Ten percent of children entering the first grade have a moderate to severe speech disorder, including stuttering.
- 42 million people in the U.S. suffer from a speech, voice, language, or hearing impairment.



Hearing screening for newborns before they leave the hospital or maternity center is becoming a common practice. Without such programs, the average age of hearing loss identification will stay at 12 to 25 months.

When hearing loss is detected late, language development is already delayed. Children are more likely to perform below their grade level, and are more likely to be held back, drop out of school, and fail to earn a high school diploma. These consequences are in sharp contrast to those for children who are identified early, receive early intervention, and then are found to function at the level of their peers by the time they enter school.

School-age children should be screened for hearing loss as needed, requested, mandated, or when conditions place them at risk for hearing disability. Screening for hearing loss identifies the school-age children most likely to have hearing impairment that may interfere with development, communication, health, and education. School age children with even minimal hearing loss are at risk for academic and communication difficulties.

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